

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 STATE 215078
ORIGIN SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 R

DRAFTED BY NEA::DRAPER :DP
APPROVED BY NEA:MDRAPER
IO - MR. HELLMAN (SUBSTANCE)
NEA/ARN - MR. HOWELL
S/S-O:TMARTIN

-----091614 240146Z /64

P 240041Z AUG 78
FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY BEIRUT PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV PRIORITY
INFO AMCONSUL JERUSALEM PRIORITY

S E C R E T STATE 215078

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, MOPS, LE, SY

SUBJECT: LEBANON'S SYRIAN PRESENCE

REF: (A) STATE 211480 (B) BEIRUT 4877 (C) DAMASCUS 4843
(D) TEL AVIV 10788

1. TO CLEAR UP ANY CONFUSION ABOUT OUR CONCEPT OF ENCOUR-
AGING THE SYRIANS TO MAKE A UNILATERAL TROOP REDUCTION, WE
HAVE NEVER THOUGHT IT WOULD BE FEASIBLE TO FOCUS ON A
SYRIAN TROOP WITHDRAWAL FROM BEIRUT ALONE. INSTEAD, OUR
CONCEPT ENVISAGED A POSSIBLY TOO OPTIMISTIC SCENARIO UNDER
WHICH TENSIONS HAD BEEN REDUCED SIGNIFICANTLY IN BEIRUT
THROUGH SYRIAN WITHDRAWALS FROM FLASHPOINTS AND POSSIBLY

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 02 STATE 215078

FROM THE MIDDLE OF THE VARIOUS CHRISTIAN QUARTERS AND LIFE
IN THE CITY HAD RETURNED TO WHAT PASSES FOR NORMAL THERE.
WE HAVE BEEN ENCOURAGING THIS PROCESS SINCE EARLY JULY BUT,
WITH THE SYRIANS, IT HAS BEEN ADVANCED BY US IN THE FORM OF
MUTUAL MARONITE MILITIA-SYRIAN DISENGAGEMENT AND MUTUAL
REDUCTION OF VISIBILITY, PLUS THE USE OF LEBANESE POLICE-
ARMY UNITS, SINCE WE ALL RECOGNIZE THAT THE SYRIANS MUST

NOT BE SEEN AS SUFFERING A DEFEAT IN THEIR CONFRONTATIONS WITH THE MILITIAS.

2. IN THIS STATE OF LOWERED TENSIONS, AND WITH AN ABATEMENT OF ISRAELI STATEMENTS AND OVERFLIGHT OPERATIONS, BUT WITH SYRIAN AND OTHER ADF FORCES STILL POSITIONED IN THE BEIRUT AREA (IN PART TO FORESTALL CONFRONTATIONS BETWEEN PALESTINIANS AND LEBANESE), OUR THOUGHT HAS BEEN THAT THE TIME MIGHT THEN BE RIGHT FOR THE SYRIANS TO ANNOUNCE A REDUCTION OF SOME OF THEIR FORCES ELSEWHERE IN THE COUNTRY WHERE SECURITY CONDITIONS HAVE BEEN CALMER THAN IN BEIRUT. WE DO NOT KNOW WHETHER THE SYRIANS COULD IN FACT MAINTAIN REASONABLE SECURITY, BEIRUT ASIDE, WITH FEWER FORCES, BUT IT IS AT LEAST WORTH EXPLORING.

3. WE AGREE THAT IT WOULD BE BETTER FOR SARKIS TO ADVANCE THE IDEA WITH THE SYRIANS. WE ARE ALSO NOW REPEAT NOH INCLINED TO THE VIEW THAT THERE MAY BE MERIT IN ADVANCING THE CONCEPT DIRECTLY WITH THE SYRIANS, OR INDIRECTLY THROUGH SARKIS, BEFORE CAMP DAVID. IF THERE IS ANY BASIS TO REPORT (TEL AVIV 10831) WHICH SOUNDS LOGICAL, THAT ISRAELIS WISH TO KEEP LID ON BEIRUT UNTIL CAM, DAVID, A SYRIAN AND/OR JOINT SYRIAN/LEBANESE ANNOUNCEMENT OF KIND WE HAVE CONTEMPLATED COULD HELP CALM THE SITUATION FOR A MUCH LONGER PERIOD. WE WOULD HAVE A STRONG PEG ON WHICH TO URGE-EVEN MORE STRONGLY-ISRAELI AND MARONITE RESTRAINT.
SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 03 STATE 215078

WE WOULD ALSO BE ABLE TO DEAL MORE EFFECTIVELY WITH THE CONCERNS OF THE LEBANESE-AMERICAN COMMUNITY AND SET THE STAGE FOR EFFORTS TO RESTORE SYRIA'S AID PROGRAM IN WEEK OF SEPTEMBER 12.

4. HE WOULD ADVANCE THE IDEA AS A PRACTICAL WAY TO RESTORE INTERNATIONAL CONFIDENCE IN SYRIA'S INTENTIONS IN LEBANON. IN THIS CONNECTION, DRAPER ON AUGUST 22 FOR THE FIRST TIME ENCOUNTERED NO REPEAT NO NEGATIVE REACTION FROM THE SYRIAN CHARGE WHEN HE AGAIN MENTIONED THAT WE THOUGHT IT WOULD BE IN SYRIA'S INTEREST TO CONTINUE THE MUTUAL REPEAT MUTUAL DISENGAGEMENT PROCESS IN BEIRUT TO THE POINT WHERE SYRIANS WOULD BE PHYSICALLY OUT OF MOST OF THE CHRISTIAN QUARTER, SINCE THERE WAS VIRTUALLY NO SOLUTION TO THE POLITICAL-SECURITY PROBLEM AND IT MIGHT BE BEST SIMPLY TO LEAVE IT ALONE. PREVIOUS DISCUSSIONS OF THIS SENSITIVE TOPIC WITH CHARGE HAVE GENERATED A STRONGLY NEGATIVE AND ALMOST HOSTILE REACTION. DRAPER ALSO STRESSED, HOWEVER, THAT WE THOUGHT THE SYRIAN PRESENCE IN LEBANON WAS ESSENTIAL TO PREVENT PALESTINIAN-CHRISTIAN AND OTHER CONFRONTATIONS.

5. WOULD APPRECIATE NEW COMMENTS.

CHRISTOPHER

SECRET

NNN

SECRET

PAGE 01 STATE 215078
ORIGIN SS-15

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /016 R

66011

DRAFTED BY IO/UNA:BJSHARP

APPROVED BY IO/UNA:JFTEFFT

S/S-O:RSNIDER

-----099422 242038Z /70

O 242000Z AUG 78

FM SECSTATE WASHDC

INFO USMISSION USUN NEW YORK IMMEDIATE 9889

S E C R E T STATE 215078

EXDIS, FOR AMB. YOUNG FROM UNA

FOLLOWING REPEAT STATE 215078 SENT ACTION BEIRUT,
DAMASCUS, TEL AVIV INFO JERUSALEM AUG 24.

QUOTE: S E C R E T STATE 215078

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, MOPS, LE, SY

SUBJECT: LEBANON'S SYRIAN PRESENCE

REF: (A) STATE 211480 (B) BEIRUT 4877 (C) DAMASCUS 4843
(D) TEL AVIV 10788

1. TO CLEAR UP ANY CONFUSION ABOUT OUR CONCEPT OF ENCOUR-
AGING THE SYRIANS TO MAKE A UNILATERAL TROOP REDUCTION, WE
HAVE NEVER THOUGHT IT WOULD BE FEASIBLE TO FOCUS ON A
SYRIAN TROOP WITHDRAWAL FROM BEIRUT ALONE. INSTEAD, OUR
SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 02 STATE 215078

CONCEPT ENVISAGED A POSSIBLY TOO OPTIMISTIC SCENARIO UNDER WHICH TENSIONS HAD BEEN REDUCED SIGNIFICANTLY IN BEIRUT THROUGH SYRIAN WITHDRAWALS FROM FLASHPOINTS AND POSSIBLY FROM THE MIDDLE OF THE VARIOUS CHRISTIAN QUARTERS AND LIFE IN THE CITY HAD RETURNED TO WHAT PASSES FOR NORMAL THERE. WE HAVE BEEN ENCOURAGING THIS PROCESS SINCE EARLY JULY BUT, WITH THE SYRIANS, IT HAS BEEN ADVANCED BY US IN THE FORM OF MUTUAL MARONITE MILITIA-SYRIAN DISENGAGEMENT AND MUTUAL REDUCTION OF VISIBILITY, PLUS THE USE OF LEBANESE POLICE-ARMY UNITS, SINCE WE ALL RECOGNIZE THAT THE SYRIANS MUST NOT BE SEEN AS SUFFERING A DEFEAT IN THEIR CONFRONTATIONS WITH THE MILITIAS.

2. IN THIS STATE OF LOWERED TENSIONS, AND WITH AN ABATEMENT OF ISRAELI STATEMENTS AND OVERFLIGHT OPERATIONS, BUT WITH SYRIAN AND OTHER ADF FORCES STILL POSITIONED IN THE BEIRUT AREA (IN PART TO FORESTALL CONFRONTATIONS BETWEEN PALESTINIANS AND LEBANESE), OUR THOUGHT HAS BEEN THAT THE TIME MIGHT THEN BE RIGHT FOR THE SYRIANS TO ANNOUNCE A REDUCTION OF SOME OF THEIR FORCES ELSEWHERE IN THE COUNTRY WHERE SECURITY CONDITIONS HAVE BEEN CALMER THAN IN BEIRUT. WE DO NOT KNOW WHETHER THE SYRIANS COULD IN FACT MAINTAIN REASONABLE SECURITY, BEIRUT ASIDE, WITH FEWER FORCES, BUT IT IS AT LEAST WORTH EXPLORING.

3. WE AGREE THAT IT WOULD BE BETTER FOR SARKIS TO ADVANCE THE IDEA WITH THE SYRIANS. WE ARE ALSO NOW REPEAT NOH INCLINED TO THE MEOW THAT THERE MAY BE MERIT IN ADVANCING THE CONCEPT DIRECTLY WITH THE SYRIANS, OR INDIRECTLY THROUGH SARKIS, BEFORE CAMP DAVID. IF THERE IS ANY BASIS TO REPORT (TEL AVIV 10831) WHICH SOUNDS LOGICAL, THAT ISRAELIS WISH TO KEEP LID ON BEIRUT UNTIL CAM, DAVID, A SYRIAN AND/OR JOINT SYRIAN/LEBANESE ANNOUNCEMENT OF KIND SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 03 STATE 215078

WE HAVE CONTEMPLATED NOULD HELP CALM THE SITUATION FOR A MUCH LONGER PERIOD. WE WOULD HAVE A STRONG PEG ON WHICH TO URGE-EVEN MORE STRONGLY-ISRAELI AND MARONITE RESTRAINT. WE WOULD ALSO BE ABLE TO DEAL MORE EFFECTIVELY WITH THE CONCERNS OF THE LEBANESE-AMERICAN COMMUNITY AND SET THE STAGE FOR EFFORTS TO RESTORE SYRIA'S AID PROGRAM IN WEEK OF SEPTEMBER 12.

4. HE WOULD ADVANCE THE IDEA AS A PRACTICAL WAY TO RESTORE INTERNATIONAL CONFIDENCE IN SYRIA'S INTENTIONS IN LEBANON. IN THIS CONNECTION, DRAPER ON AUGUST 22 FOR THE FIRST TIME ENCOUNTERED NO REPEAT NO NEGATIVE REACTION FROM THE SYRIAN

CHARGE WHEN HE AGAIN MENTIONED THAT WE THOUGHT IT WOULD BE
IN SYRIA'S INTEREST TO CONTINUE THE MUTUAL REPEAT MUTUAL
DISENGAGEMENT PROCESS IN BEIRUT TO THE POINT WHERE SYRIANS
WOULD BE PHYSICALLY OUT OF MOST OF THE CHRISTIAN QUARTER,
SINCE THERE WAS VIRTUALLY NO SOLUTION TO THE POLITICAL-
SECURITY PROBLEM AND IT MIGHT BE BEST SIMPLY TO LEAVE IT
ALONE. PREVIOUS DISCUSSIONS OF THIS SENSITIVE TOPIC WITH
CHARGE HAVE GENERATED A STRONGLY NEGATIVE AND ALMOST HOSTILE
REACTION. DRAPER ALSO STRESSED, HOWEVER, THAT WE THOUGHT
THE SYRIAN PRESENCE IN LEBANON WAS ESSENTIAL TO PREVENT
PALESTINIAN-CHRISTIAN AND OTHER CONFRONTATIONS.

5. WOULD APPRECIATE NEW COMMENTS. CHRISTOPHER
UNQUOTE CHRISTOPHER

SECRET

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: GOVERNMENT REACTIONS, MILITARY PLANS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 24 aug 1978
Decaption Date: 20 Mar 2014
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978STATE215078
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: ;DRAPER :DP
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780345-1056
Format: TEL
From: STATE
Handling Restrictions:
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780827/aaaaawrp.tel
Line Count: 238
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 0d04a45c-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ORIGIN SS
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 5
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Reference: 78 STATE 211480, 78 BEIRUT 4877, 78 DAMASCUS 4843, 78 TEL AVIV 10788
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 28 jun 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 1632339
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: LEBANON'S SYRIAN PRESENCE
TAGS: PINT, MOPS, LE, SY, US
To: BEIRUT DAMASCUS MULTIPLE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/0d04a45c-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014